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AUTHOR Anthony, Margaret; And Others
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ABSTRACT

In 1985-1986, the mission of Connecticut's Committee on Four-Year-Olds, Their Families, and the Public Schools was to develop strategies to alleviate structural and systematic problems that could diminish the success of expanded early intervention efforts in the state. This report of the yearlong effort begins with a review of the committee's work in 1984-1985. A description of the committee's mission and organizational structure follows. Work of the committee is described in terms of problems that need analysis and problems that are ready for action. Problems needing analysis include: (1) the establishment of early childhood demonstration programs throughout the state; (2) an assessment of training and technical assistance capacities and needs; (3) credentialing; and (4) effective strategies for promoting home-school communications. Problems ready for action are public information and advocacy, interagency collaboration, and the development of an early childhood data base. The report concludes with a synopsis of recommendations directed to the State Department of Education in conjunction with other agencies serving young children and their families. Appended are facts and principles of the 1984-1985 report, lists of committee membership and contract consultants, the model employer report, the training and technical assistance report, and, extensively, plans for credentialing-retraining and home-school linkage. (RH)

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SERVING CONNECTICUT'S FOUR-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES:

ESTABLISHING THE INFRASTRUCTURE

A Report of the Committee on Four Year Olds,
Their Families, and the Public Schools

Margaret Anthony
Vijaya V. Bapat, M.D., M.P.H.
Irene Barry
George Coleman
Barbara Coulibaly, Ph.D.
Elizabeth Davenport
Muriel Hamilton-Lee, Ed.D.
Barbara Hamlin
James Kennedy, Ph.D.
Mavis LaBossiere
Vincent Mazzotta
Evelyn Mitchell
Dede Moore
Nan Streeter
Irene Weiss

Sharon L. Kagan, Ed.D.
Chairperson & Editor

Contract Consultants

Judith Hurle
Regina Miller, Ph.D.
Claudia Shuster
Andrea Urbano

Connecticut State Department of Education

Jean Rustici
Virginia Volk, Ph.D.
Dianne Warner

Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy

Leslie Branden

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION....2

II. BACKGROUND....3

A. Four Year Olds: Who is Responsible? (1984-1985)....3
B. Committee Mission and Structure (1985-1986)....7

III. ANALYSIS TOPICS....9

A. Early Childhood Demonstration Efforts....9
B. Training and Technical Assistance....10
C. Credentialing....13
D. Home/School Linkages....16

IV. ACTION TOPICS....18

A. Public Information and Advocacy....18
B. Interagency Cooperation....19
C. Data Base....20

V. REVIEW OF 1985-1986 RECOMMENDATIONS....21

APPENDICES

A. Four Year Olds: Who is Responsible?, Concluding Facts and Principles....A-1
B. Committee Membership, 1985-1986....A-4
C. Contract Consultants, 1985-1986....A-5
D. Model Employer Report....A-6
E. Training and Technical Assistance Report....A-9
F. Credentialing Plan....A-17
G. Home/School Linkage Plan....A-35

I. INTRODUCTION

In June of 1985, the Committee on Four Year Olds, Their Families and The Public Schools submitted a report, Four Year Olds: Who is Responsible?, to the Connecticut State Board of Education. This report outlined the developmental needs of young children and their families, assessed the availability of services in Connecticut, and proposed recommendations and an action plan. The report was accepted by the State Board of Education, and modest funding was granted so that the Committee could continue its work in 1985-1986.

Taking the recommendations from the 1985 report, the Committee, in 1985-1986, did extensive analysis, developed a work plan, and established the structures necessary to fulfill its goals. This document: 1) chronicles the mission and work of the Four Year Old Committee during 1985-1986; 2) reports the Committee's findings; and 3) makes recommendations regarding the development of an infrastructure to enhance Connecticut's services for young children and their families.

Specifically, this report begins with a review of the Committee's work in 1984-1985, thereby setting the context for 1985-1986 efforts. A description of the Committee's mission and organizational structure follows. Work of the Committee, divided into Analysis and Action Topics, is described. Analysis topics include the preparation of an R.F.P. for the Early Childhood Demonstration Effort, an assessment of training and technical assistance capacities and needs, a review of credentialing, and an analysis of effective strategies to promote home-school communications. Action Topics are public information and advocacy, interagency collaboration, and data base. The report concludes with a synopsis of the recommendations for the State Department of Education (S.D.E.) in conjunction with other agencies serving young children and their families.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Four Year Olds: Who is Responsible? (1984-1985)

Fueled by recent positive research findings and parental needs for early care, interest in early childhood education has accelerated rapidly. This interest, coupled with Connecticut's long-standing commitment to children, led the Connecticut State Board of Education, through Commissioner Gerald Tirozzi, to convene a study committee on four-year-old children and the public schools. Established during the 1984-1985 academic year, the Committee was asked to:

(1) establish a conceptual foundation supporting developmentally appropriate programs and services for four-year-old children and their families;

(2) assess existing services, identify served and unserved populations, providers of services, and gaps in services;

(3) identify methods of coordinating existing services and new services needed by the population, and assess the costs, personnel and training needs, and the impact of new services on the current structure of kindergarten and primary grades; and

(4) make recommendations regarding the above to the State Board of Education.

Broadly composed, the Committee included early childhood practitioners, heads and representatives of state and local agencies serving young children, members of local boards of education, legislators, researchers, school administrators, faculty members, and parents. Working throughout the 1984-1985 year, the Committee grappled with three major themes:

(1) what is an appropriate role for the State Department of Education (S.D.E.), given that so many programs and services for young children occur outside its aegis? (Of four year olds in Connecticut who are receiving services, 95% are in programs not affiliated with public schools);

(2) is it developmentally appropriate to isolate four year olds, or any group, from a continuum of developmental services for young children?; and

(3) in a time of limited resources and inconsistent ideologies, can universal access to a given set of programs, although justified, be realized?

The Committee felt that the S.D.E. had an important role with regard to four-year-old children, but it underscored that the S.D.E. must be sensitive to the critical functions of other state agencies and private sector service providers. The Committee did not recommend a "kindergarten-type" program within the public schools, but instead, advocated a flexible open approach to serving four year olds, one that would encourage experiential learning and the existence of multiple forms of programs and services.

Second, the Committee acknowledged that while four-year-old children have unique developmental characteristics, they function within a continuum of growth. Therefore, any programs and policies promulgated needed to form a continuum of services, spanning birth to the early years.

Third, the Committee felt that not all families wanted or needed identical services for their young children. Recognizing this diversity, the Committee strongly advocated the preservation of options so that parents could choose the service or services that best meet their unique needs. Universal access, based on parental option, was to be the cornerstone of all policies for young children. Based on these theoretical premises and analyses of the research that the Committee conducted, a set of facts and working principles was derived (Appendix A). These facts and principles formed the basis for the recommendations made by the Committee.

A review of the 1984-1985 recommendations indicates: (1) that the Committee was concerned not solely with services for children, but with providing services for parents and for the profession; (2) that it was concerned not solely with State Board of Education responsibilities, but with the collective coordinated response of state agencies and programs

that serve young children; and (3) that the Committee was not grandiose in recommending immediate implementation of services and programs for all children and families. Rather, it favored a demonstration or model approach, thereby providing resources for selected districts to ease their way into serving very young children, while simultaneously providing time for the development of an infrastructure that would support a more major effort.

The recommendations called for working out methods of interagency coordination, creating an effective training and technical assistance plan, developing a systematized approach to individual and program credentialing, analyzing and promulgating existing and potentially fruitful methods of home-school communication, and encouraging the state to serve as a model employer.

Specifically, recommendations from the 1984-1985 report were:

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

WE RECOMMEND THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TAKE LEADERSHIP IN ESTABLISHING AND FUNDING STATE-LEVEL MECHANISMS THAT WILL:

coordinate existing and proposed programs and services, ensuring that they are offered equitably, and at parental option;

examine existing and innovative credentialing systems for personnel serving young children, with the goal of developing equitable credentialing alternatives;

establish a single state-wide data base that will provide accurate information on the status of young children and their families in the State.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

WE RECOMMEND THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER AGENCIES THAT SERVE FOUR YEAR OLDS AND THEIR FAMILIES, LAUNCH AND FUND A COORDINATED STATE-WIDE PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGN THAT WILL INFORM CONNECTICUT'S CITIZENS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

WE RECOMMEND THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PROVIDE TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN SUFFICIENT AMOUNTS THAT WILL:

enable providers of programs for young children and school personnel to implement developmentally appropriate services. Training should also focus on the critical role parents play in the early years, and on mechanisms to involve parents in the education of their children. The training should be planned and implemented in conjunction with other agencies that serve four year olds and their families.

EARLY HOME/SCHOOL LINKAGES

WE RECOMMEND THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAMS AND EFFORTS THAT FOSTER COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS BY:

providing incentive grants and sufficient technical assistance to districts that establish or expand programs that communicate with parents about child growth and development, parenting education, and available community services for young children and their families.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEMONSTRATION DISTRICTS

WE RECOMMEND THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DESIGNATE AND FUND EIGHT EARLY CHILDHOOD DEMONSTRATION DISTRICTS THAT WILL:

implement a variety of locally designed models of early childhood education, in collaboration with public and private providers of services. Components of such models might include the establishment of a local early childhood council, the coordination of resource and referral services, the utilization of available local district space and existing resources, the provision of direct services, and the credentialing of staff and the accreditation of exemplary programs. Each district would be required to provide equity of access, cost-benefit projections, and a systematic evaluation to determine the models' efficacy and replicability. Results of the evaluation should be reviewed and recommendations formulated for future action.

MODEL EMPLOYER

WE RECOMMEND THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ENCOURAGE THE STATE TO BECOME A MODEL EMPLOYER BY SUPPORTING POLICIES AND PRACTICES THAT IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN.

B. Committee Mission and Structure (1985-1986).

A review of the 1984-1985 recommendations indicates a commitment to the careful orchestration of the expansion of services for young children in Connecticut. While advocating universal services for all four-year-old children, the report took a conservative stand, calling for the parallel development of model program types at the local and regional level, and the establishment of a state-wide infrastructure that would support broader program expansion at a later date.

During the 1985-1986 year, the Committee on Four Year Olds, Their Families, and the Public Schools identified the organizational infrastructure necessary to support quality programming for young children and their families. The Committee identified extant structural weakness in the delivery system including discontinuities, fragmentation, absence of data, absence of public awareness, and high staff turnover rates. Because these problems would only be exacerbated by any expansion of services, the Committee felt it important to establish mechanisms that would address these difficulties directly. Hence, the Committee's mission in 1985-1986 was to develop strategies to alleviate structural and systemic problems that would mitigate the success of expanded early intervention efforts in Connecticut. The Committee selected eight work topics from the 1984-1985 report that needed attention; it also explored available resources-- human, technical, and written. After the Committee's initial analysis, it was decided that the eight work topics fell into distinct categories: (1) those that needed more analysis before specific strategies could be recommended; and (2) those where action was already being taken. Graphically, the work topics and their categories can be diagrammed as follows:

ANALYSIS TOPICS

Early Childhood Demonstration Efforts | Training and Technical Assistance

Credentialing | Home/School Linkages | Model Employer

ACTION TOPICS

Public Information | Interagency Cooperation | Data Base

The Committee (Appendix B) developed a work schedule and plan for each of the five Analysis and three Action topics. Of course, the strategies differed depending on the nature of the task to be accomplished and available resources. The Analysis Topics were handled by the Committee with the assistance of paid contract consultants (Appendix C). Committee members selected an Analysis Topic on which to concentrate, thereby forming sub-committees. Each sub-committee developed its own work plan, usually with sub-committee members generating tasks and guiding the consultants. In each case, the scope of the problem was analyzed, a review of existing and projected services or models conducted, and an end product and recommendations produced. Detailed reports on each of the Analysis Topics follow.*

The Committee decided, after an initial assessment of the work plan, that it was impossible to work on both Action Topics and Analysis Topics simultaneously. Intensive work on the Action Topics was deferred until after the Analysis Topics were completed. In this way, results from the analyses served to inform actions that needed to be undertaken.

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* It should be pointed out that the "Model Employer" analysis deviated from this format in that it was carried out by an intern of the Department with the guidance of a State Department of Education consultant. The work, although presented to the total Committee, is not a product of Committee research or analysis. It therefore is included as an appendix to this report (Appendix D).

III. ANALYSIS TOPICS

A. Early Childhood Demonstration Efforts

In order to establish early childhood demonstration efforts in municipalities across the state, priority was placed on developing an appropriate Request For Proposal (R.F.P.) and legislation. This task was a priority not only because of the legislative schedule, but because the early childhood demonstration effort provided a vehicle to realize the Committee's programmatic goals for young children. In addition to crafting the R.F.P., members of the sub-committee also worked on the corresponding legislation.

The sub-committee developed the R.F.P., detailing funding eligibility, review criteria, and procedures. The R.F.P. calls for the establishment of six to eight early childhood demonstration efforts throughout the state. The efforts would serve as models of effective collaboration between home and school, and between public and private agencies, with the goal of providing comprehensive and innovative approaches to serving pre-school aged children and their families. In all aspects, the programs would adhere to principles of child and family growth and development.

Because funds for the early childhood demonstration efforts needed to come from the legislature, the sub-committee, along with members of the entire Committee, spent considerable effort acquainting legislators with the provisions of the R.F.P. and the legislation that accompanied it. Unfortunately, this legislation was not heard before the Education Committee, nor were funds authorized or appropriated.

In spite of the lack of success in this legislative session, it is important that the State Board of Education continue to support this initiative in future sessions. Therefore,

I. THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SUSTAIN ITS STRONG COMMITMENT TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, MAKING IT A LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY OF THE DEPARTMENT IN 1986-1987, WITH SPECIFIC PROVISIONS FOR LEGISLATION TO ENACT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEMONSTRATION EFFORTS.

B. Training and Technical Assistance

Because any expanded early childhood effort will generate the need for additional personnel, the Committee selected training and technical assistance as its second Analysis Topic. Predicated on recommendations from the 1984-1985 report and recent data confirming alarmingly high turnover rates in early childhood programs, the need for a systematic analysis of the state's training and retraining capacities was essential.

The sub-committee assessed existing training resources and their utilization, as well as needs that might arise in conjunction with any expansion of services to young children and their families. To assess existing services, the sub-committee looked at towns with "low", "medium", and "high" levels of available services to four year olds, based on the 1984-1985 report. By using this strategy, the group was able to explore links between current service availability and current training capability.

It was determined that most training was offered by local early childhood organizations on an average of five times a year for providers. Local Education Agency (L.E.A.), Head Start, and Department of Human Resource (D.H.R.) centers held training on a fairly regular basis with the training geared to staff's specific needs. Parents, although invited to attend, rarely did. Public libraries offered some activities for parents

with their children, and some of these were designed for parents who were at home with young children. Often these sessions were not scheduled to accommodate the needs of working or single-parent families.

Other training resources provided by state agencies were closely tied to funding availability and funding stream. Little communication and networking existed across sponsorship streams, resulting in some training redundancies. The Department of Health, which licenses day care centers and group day care homes, offered minimal training. The S.D.E., as part of an interagency agreement, provided consultation to providers and parents. Additionally, under PL. 94-142, the Department sponsored a state-wide Early Childhood Education Network that offered training and technical assistance to L.E.A.'s, public and private early childhood programs, and parents. In general, training was found to be available, but its frequency varied tremendously, based on funding stream.

Utilization of training is an issue quite separate from availability of training. The sub-committee found that utilization was dependent on three main factors: 1) the location of the training; 2) the cost of training, if any; and 3) whether or not training was required. In programs where training was planned for staff and in-service time allotted on a scheduled basis, usage was high. If fees were low, and location and time were convenient, usage was also high.

The content of training varied tremendously, but generally could be clustered into five major types (amplified more fully in the sub-committee's report attached as Appendix E): 1) child development; 2) special education; 3) human and community relations; 4) hands-on, how-to; and 5) management/administrative. Programs receiving special education monies provided scheduled parent training on specific needs of families, and typically were utilized not only by those working specifically in

special education, but also by nursery, day care center, and public school personnel. Head Start provided assistance and training in areas directly related to children and families, as did D.H.R., to programs under its aegis.

In order for the Committee to assess future training needs, providers in the selected communities were asked to submit their needs assessments. Several groups used formal assessment tools, while others surveyed parents and staff at annual meetings or discussion groups. Most providers regretted doing little for parents and indicated that more parent training was needed and desired. Providers believed that parents would be receptive to additional opportunities for developing their parenting skills.

Essentially then, fragmentation and a lack of coordination of resources characterize current training activities in Connecticut. Although well-intentioned, providers, directors, and school personnel are handicapped by the lack of time to plan and execute training, by a lack of access to broad training opportunities and by a lack of funds for training. A comprehensive approach to training for staff and parents, embodied in a state plan that includes roles for two and four year colleges, would avoid replication and build continuity among the early childhood community. Therefore,

II. THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING AND RETRAINING EARLY CHILDHOOD PERSONNEL BY:

* establishing a task force charged with responsibility for developing a state early childhood training plan. The plan would list existing resources, available

trainers and topics, and would identify potential public and private funding sources. The task force would build upon existing resources, and, through coordination, would access training to areas of the state and to providers in funding streams where training is scarce.

* adding an additional early childhood consultant who would be responsible for staffing the task force and for establishing on-going mechanisms to sustain training for early childhood providers in the state, regardless of their program's sponsorship.
* adding capacity to the Early Childhood Education Network to enhance its ability to facilitate and deliver training.

C. Credentialing

Closely related to the need to expand training and technical assistance is the need to examine and systematize credentialing standards for individuals and for programs. Currently, grave disparities exist in the way individuals and programs are credentialed.

The credentialing sub-committee outlined four major objectives: (1) to assess approaches to credentialing individuals and programs for three, four, and five year olds in the state; (2) to review other states' credentialing standards; (3) to review innovative credentialing efforts; and (4) to develop recommendations regarding early childhood credentialing efforts that might be appropriate state-wide.

Three approaches to credentialing individuals are operative in the state: (1) Child Development Associate (C.D.A.); (2) the associates degree in early childhood; and (3) state certification. These are explained more

fully in Appendix F. These credentials stress different skills and competencies, as well as different levels of training and experience. Different salary levels are also associated with the three approaches.

Connecticut currently has in place one main approach to credentialing early childhood centers that provide care and education for children, known as The Connecticut Child Day Care Licensing Regulations. Recently updated, the regulations cover health, safety, physical facilities, staffing and program content. In addition, several Connecticut programs have applied to the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs for center accreditation--a voluntary credential that is nationally regarded as an imprimatur of quality.

A review of other states' credentialing efforts indicated that ten states and Washington, DC require that at least one member of a child care center staff hold either a BS or BA degree. Of these, only three states mandated that the degree be in early childhood education. There was also great variance in requirements for state certification and for student teaching. Often, standards were modified due to changes in National Council for Accreditation for Teacher Education (N.C.A.T.E.) requirements. In spite of disparities among states, the C.D.A. credential, the one national credential, seemed to be gaining widespread use. It had been incorporated into the licensing requirements for at least one category of center staff in 26 states including Connecticut; an additional seven states have C.D.A. in their draft regulations.

Given this fragmentation in credentialing approaches, several important steps need to be taken to promote greater consistency in the process. First, nomenclature must be standardized. If job titles and job descriptions were unified across the state, horizontal mobility would be

easier, thus allowing both individuals seeking employment and potential employers to share expectations of competencies. Given that one credential stresses competencies (C.D.A.), while others stress academic credits (A.A. and B.A./B.S. degrees), certification efforts might consider a two-pronged approach, incorporating both a competency exam and academic credits. A new framework might be developed that would allow an individual to work on: (1) the C.D.A. and certification simultaneously; (2) the C.D.A. after certification; or (3) certification after C.D.A. An individual with the C.D.A. and certification would have demonstrated both conceptual knowledge and practical skills necessary for working with young children.

Because so many educators are being transferred or are transferring voluntarily to early childhood, any credentialing strategy must involve a retraining component. This is critical because individuals who are trained to work with older children do not automatically understand the nature and needs of preschool children and their families. Retraining should also be both theoretical and competency based.

Connecticut's increased salaries for starting certified teachers in public schools has exacerbated the credentialing dilemma. Because prospective early childhood providers in the non-education sector are naturally attracted by the higher salaries afforded by public education systems, recruiting providers to the non-public education sector has become increasingly difficult. If there were a coordinated credentialing continuum for early childhood personnel, competition for teachers would be eased, as would tensions in the field. Given extant credentialing discontinuities, the Departments' work on credentialing, and the impact of increased teacher salaries on early childhood,

III. THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TAKE THE LEADERSHIP IN DEVELOPING A POSITION ON CREDENTIALING EARLY CHILDHOOD INDIVIDUALS AND PROGRAMS, WITH INPUT FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER AGENCIES AND GROUPS CURRENTLY ADDRESSING CREDENTIALING ISSUES.

D. Home/School Linkages

Recognizing the importance of involving families in the education of their young children, the Committee sought to assess how schools in Connecticut and throughout the nation were establishing links with children's families. The goal of this Analysis Topic was to determine successful methods of communication and cooperation that could be adopted or adapted by districts as they forge links between schools, families, and community agencies.

To determine the ways in which public schools communicated with families, the sub-committee developed a survey that was sent to all districts in Connecticut by the Connecticut Association of School Administrators. The data revealed that some districts have made a significant commitment to services and programs that strengthen families, thereby enhancing a family's ability to support the development of its young children. Vehicles being used in Connecticut (explained more fully in the sub-committee report attached as Appendix G) included:

1. Written communications (newsletters, pamphlets and handbooks) as well as informational materials describing available programs and services;

2. Telephone hotlines and warmlines that made information available to parents;

3. Resource and referral services;

4. Networking/interagency collaborations or early childhood councils;

5. Lending book and toy libraries;

6. Parenting education programs, including workshops at the workplace;

7. Joint parent-child activities;

8. Early identification and screening;

9. Parent to parent programs where parents were linked with others to form informal support groups;

10. Transportation that enabled parents to participate in important events at school; and

11. Staff training, fostering parent involvement and effective home/school relations.

In addition, the sub-committee documented the existence of impressive efforts linking homes and schools in other states. The Connecticut and national data will be the basis for a resource compendium. A suitable publisher and distribution method will be sought with the goal of making the document available to principals and school personnel state-wide. Endorsements will be solicited from state organizations, including those represented by individuals on the Four Year Old Committee, and the document will be circulated to interested individuals in other states.

IV. THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TAKE THE LEADERSHIP IN DEVELOPING A POSITION ON HOME/SCHOOL LINKAGES THAT WILL PROMOTE CONTINUITY BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES.

IV. ACTION TOPICS

A. Public Information and Advocacy

The Committee fully recognizes the importance of providing appropriate information regarding the values and benefits of early education, the correlates of quality in child care and early education settings, and the role of parents in the early education process. Because the Department of Education had a public information specialist, Committee members decided to work in consort with her. Unfortunately, as the Committee began this task, the specialist resigned, leaving, at that time, no staff person with whom to work. In lieu of working with a particular specialist, individual Committee members became involved in numerous speaking and public information efforts, including professional conferences, public forums, and radio and TV broadcasts.

Nonetheless, the Committee's vision for a comprehensive public information campaign on early education has not been fully realized. This is a particularly necessary effort, given that the Department's Early Childhood legislative initiatives will need broad-based public support. To that end, we recommend two strategies, one focusing on public information, and the other on the development of a body that will orchestrate advocacy efforts state-wide.

V. THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER AGENCIES THAT SERVE FOUR YEAR OLDS AND THEIR FAMILIES, LAUNCH AND FUND A COORDINATED STATE-WIDE PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGN THAT WILL INFORM CONNECTICUT'S CITIZENS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

VI. THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ESTABLISH AN ON-GOING COMMITTEE TO ADVISE THE DEPARTMENT'S EARLY CHILDHOOD UNIT. THIS COMMITTEE SHOULD BE COMPOSED OF PARENTS, PROVIDERS, RESEARCHERS, POLICYMAKERS, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS STATE AGENCIES SERVING YOUNG CHILDREN. THE COMMITTEE'S WORK SHOULD FOCUS ON THE MOBILIZATION OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD, ALONG WITH OTHER EFFORTS APPROPRIATE TO THE EXPANSION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS IN CONNECTICUT.

B. Interagency Collaboration

Implicit in all of the aforementioned recommendations is the need for coordination among agencies serving young children. To date, a number of coordinating mechanisms exist within the state: the Child Day Care Council; the Connecticut Early Childhood Education Council; and the Interagency Task Force, conceived by the "Birth to Three" Committee. Rather than establishing an entirely new interagency agreement, the Committee on Four Year Olds, Their Families and the Public Schools sought to work through existing mechanisms, and to support the work of the Birth to Three Committee. Additionally,

VII. THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MAKE PROVISIONS IN ITS EARLY CHILDHOOD TASK FORCES, AND IN ALL ITS LEGISLATIVE AND FUNDING EFFORTS, TO INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE MANY AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT SERVE YOUNG CHILDREN.

C. Data Base

In compiling this report, members of the task force and the contract consultants became painfully aware of the grave lack of data on pre-school children in the state. There is no single data source on pre-schoolers; available data must be pieced together to form a comprehensive picture of where and how young children are being served. Because different agencies use different data-gathering techniques, different criteria, and have different areas of interest, even available data on pre-school children remain inconsistent and incomplete. Very basic facts, available on other population cohorts, are simply non-existent for pre-schoolers. Not unique to Connecticut, this paucity parallels the lack of consistent data on pre-schoolers available at the national level. Nonetheless, if we expect to expand services and programs, and to pass legislation, better data are absolutely necessary. Given the excellent research staff in the Department of Education, there is the capacity to generate the data base that will be needed as early childhood programs expand, and are evaluated. To that end,

VIII. THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PLACE PRIORITY ON ESTABLISHING DATA-GATHERING MECHANISMS FOR PRE-SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN. THIS SHOULD SHOULD BE DONE IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES, AND SHOULD BE PLANNED SO THAT COMPREHENSIVE AND LONGITUDINAL DATA ARE AVAILABLE ON ALL PRE-SCHOOL YOUNGSTERS.

V. REVIEW OF 1985-1986 RECOMMENDATIONS

Differing significantly from our work in 1984-1985 when the Committee responded to a specific charge, in 1985-1986 the Committee's work focused on issues of generic concern to the early childhood community. Hence, areas tackled, data generated and analyzed, and recommendations presented provide the foundation for what we hope and anticipate will be a sustained commitment to Connecticut's young children.

Because the care and education of our youngest citizens is fragmented--between the public and the private sector, between profit and non-profits, and between government sectors--little uniformity exists. Further, because the preparatory system for personnel, the data collection system, the regulatory system and the support and training system are also internally fragmented, the hope for consolidating early childhood remains remote unless specific efforts are untaken to build a coordinated infrastructure. We believe that the establishment of the recommended committees is an important step to that end. Not only will the committees generate necessary and badly needed products, but through the very process of working together, across agencies and across services, new and important cooperative links will be established. Such has been the experience of the Four Year Old Committee. Through our work together over the past two years, we have not only conducted analyses and produced recommendations, but we have been part of the process of broadening the commitment to collaboration and to the care and education of young children.

We have appreciated the opportunity to work together, as the experience has been professionally rewarding for us as individuals, and, we hope, beneficial to the field. We are especially appreciative of strong

support from Commissioner Gerald Tirozzi and the S.D.E. staff, particularly Dianne Warner, Jean Rustici, and Virginia Volk.

Finally, given initiatives currently underway in Connecticut, including the establishment of the Children's Commission and the National Council of State Legislators' targeting of early childhood in Connecticut, we feel the time is ripe for the Connecticut Board of Education to place its first priority on young children. The recommendations contained herein are fundamental, and, as such, provide the necessary steps that must be taken if Connecticut is to move from an emphasis on rhetoric extolling early childhood to an emphasis on the reality of quality early childhood programming. As the Four Year Old Committee disbands, we repeat the following recommendations, leaving them as a legacy for what, we believe, can be Connecticut's efficient and high-quality early childhood initiative.

I. EARLY CHILDHOOD AS A LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY

The Committee recommends that the State Board of Education sustain its strong commitment to early childhood education, making it a legislative priority of the Department in 1986-1987, with specific provisions for legislation to enact the Early Childhood Demonstration Efforts.

II. SUPPORTS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD TRAINING

The Committee recommends that the State Board of Education acknowledge the importance of training and retraining early childhood personnel by:

* establishing a task force charged with responsibility for developing a state early childhood training plan. The plan would

list existing resources, available trainers and topics, and would identify potential public and private funding sources. The task force would build upon existing resources, and, through coordination, would access training to areas of the state and to providers in funding streams where training is scarce.

* adding an additional early childhood consultant who would be responsible for staffing the task force and for establishing on-going mechanisms to sustain training for early childhood providers in the state, regardless of their program's sponsorship.
* adding staff capacity to the Early Childhood Education Network to enhance its ability to facilitate and deliver training.

III. SYSTEMATIZE EARLY CHILDHOOD CREDENTIALING

The Committee recommends that the State Board of Education take the leadership in developing a position on credentialing early childhood individuals and programs, with input from representatives of other agencies and groups currently addressing credentialing issues.

IV. HOME/SCHOOL LINKAGES

The Committee recommends that the State Board of Education take the leadership in developing a position on home/school linkages that will promote continuity between schools and families.

V. EARLY CHILDHOOD PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

The Committee recommends that the State Board of Education, in conjunction with other agencies that serve four year olds and their

families, launch and fund a coordinated state-wide public information campaign that will inform Connecticut's citizens about the importance and cost-effectiveness of early childhood programs and services.

VI. EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY/ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

The Committee recommends that the State Department of Education establish an on-going committee to advise the Department's Early Childhood Unit. This committee should be composed of parents, providers, researchers, policymakers, and representatives of various state agencies serving young children. The committee's work should focus on the mobilization of public support for early childhood, along with other efforts appropriate to the expansion of early childhood programs in Connecticut.

VII. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

The Committee recommends that the State Department of Education make provisions in its Early Childhood Task Forces, and in all its legislative and funding efforts, to include representatives from the many agencies and organizations that serve young children.

VIII. EARLY CHILDHOOD DATA BASE

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education place priority on establishing data-gathering mechanisms for pre-school aged children. This should be done in collaboration with other agencies, and should be planned so that comprehensive and longitudinal data are available on all pre-school youngsters.

APPENDIX A

Four Year Olds: Who is Responsible?
Concluding Facts and Principles

Synthesizing the results of demographic trends, research evidence, and practical, political, and financial constraints, the Committee developed nine facts and evolved nine respective principles that frame our recommendations.

It should be understood that we favor equity of services for all four-year-old children and their families, but that equity does not necessarily imply identical services. At a minimum, we believe that all families, even those who have resources and are able to exercise initiative, would benefit from early contact with the schools--in the form, for example, of parenting education or resource and referral systems. For families with limited incomes or with special needs children, if an impact on school and social competence is desired, then more intensive services are warranted. If equity of educational opportunity is to be realized, then differentiated services, prior to age five, must be considered.

FACT: 1. Substantial research underscores the importance of the early years in human development, stressing that the four-year-old child does not exist in isolation, but must be understood in a broader social and developmental context. The young child influences and is influenced by a social network that includes parents, family, friends, neighbors, school, and community people. Developmentally, the four year old must be seen along an age continuum with the primary goal of the early years as developing comprehensive competencies at individually variable rates.

PRINCIPLE: WE ARE COMMITTED TO INVOLVING THE FAMILY IN SERVICES FOR THE YOUNG CHILD AND TO CREATING A CONTINUITY OF SERVICES THAT WILL SERVE PRESCHOOL CHILDREN AS THEY DEVELOP SOCIALLY, EMOTIONALLY, PHYSICALLY, AND INTELLECTUALLY.

FACT: 2. In Connecticut, a number of agencies have important and specific responsibilities regarding preschool children. Preschool children are not the purview or the exclusive responsibility of any one state agency.

PRINCIPLE: WE RECOGNIZE THE NEED FOR, AND ARE COMMITTED TO, FOSTERING INTERAGENCY COOPERATION, PARTICULARLY IN IMPLEMENTING, PLANNING AND EVALUATING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

FACT: 3. The Connecticut State Department of Education has a mandate to have general supervision and control of the educational interests of the state, including preschool (Sec. 10-4).

PRINCIPLE: WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF S.D.E. IN SERVING YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES.

FACT: 4. Currently preschool programs and services are not available equally to all children due to cost and eligibility requirements, staff availability, geographic inaccessibility, and a lack of enrollment space for four year olds in existing programs. As a result, many areas of Connecticut are underserved by the existing programs and many of these programs are economically stratified.

PRINCIPLE: WE ARE COMMITTED TO A FAIR DISTRIBUTION OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES; TO EQUAL ACCESS TO PROGRAMS FOR ALL CHILDREN, AND TO PROVIDE ECONOMICALLY AND RACIALLY INTEGRATED SERVICES.

FACT: 5. Substantial research demonstrates that high-quality developmentally appropriate early childhood intervention is positively correlated with enhanced rates of learning and reduced dropout rates, as well as a reduced involvement in delinquency and crime, and reduced welfare dependence.

PRINCIPLE: WE BELIEVE THAT INVESTING IN QUALITY PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IS COST-EFFECTIVE AND HELPS CHILDREN MAXIMIZE THEIR TOTAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES MORE EFFECTIVELY.

FACT: 6. Current Connecticut demographic trends, including increases in the number of children born, the number of women in the paid labor force, and the number of children born in poverty (which is disproportionately high among minority groups), accelerate the need for access to quality early childhood programming prior to the traditional age of school entry.

PRINCIPLE: WE BELIEVE THAT THERE IS A PRESSING NEED TO ENHANCE SERVICES FOR ALL CHILDREN AND TO MAKE MORE SERVICES AVAILABLE PARTICULARLY IN UNSERVED AND UNDERSERVED LOCALES.

FACT: 7. Programs and services for the preschool population within the state vary on every measurable dimension such as sponsorship, goals, orientation, and nature of services provided. They also vary in size, length of service, and source of funding.

PRINCIPLE: WE SUPPORT HETEROGENEITY OF SERVICES AND BELIEVE THAT NO SINGLE APPROACH OR TYPE OF SERVICE, BE IT PUBLIC OR PRIVATE, CAN MEET THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF CONNECTICUT'S CHILDREN AND FAMILIES. RATHER WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE EXISTENCE OF A RANGE OF SERVICES, WITH OPTIONS OFFERED TO PARENTS.

FACT: 8. Four-year-old children vary significantly in their behaviors and competencies, demonstrating a wide range of interests and abilities.

PRINCIPLE: WE BELIEVE THAT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES MUST PRESERVE SUFFICIENT FLEXIBILITY TO MEET THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

FACT: 9. Because of the American commitment to family privacy and because of questions regarding the appropriate role of the state (or agencies) in family life, serving four year olds via the public schools is a highly personal and controversial issue, generating strong, diverse public opinion.

PRINCIPLE: WE ARE COMMITTED TO A WELL-PLANNED LONG-TERM EFFORT TO ACQUAINT THE CONNECTICUT PUBLIC WITH THE VALUE OF PRESCHOOL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS.

APPENDIX B

Committee Membership, 1985-1986

Sharon Lynn Kagan, Ed.D., Chair
Associate Director
Bush Center
Yale University

Margaret Anthony
Elementary & Middle School
Principals Association of
Connecticut
Principal, Northwest School
Storrs

Vijaya V. Bapat, M.D., M.P.H.
Physician
Maternal and Child Health Section
Connecticut Dept. of Health Serv.

Irene Barry
Parent Teacher Assoc. of Conn.
Director, Children's Center
East Hartford

George Coleman
Director
Community Action Committee of
Danbury, Inc.
Danbury

Barbara Coulibaly, Ph.D.
Early Childhood Consultant
Hartford

Elizabeth Davenport
Director
First Church Nursery School
Windsor

Muriel Hamilton-Lee, Ed.D.
Associate Research Scientist
Yale Child Study Center

Barbara Hamlin
Director
Children's Center
New Milford

James Kennedy, Ph.D.
Connecticut Association of
School Administrators
Superintendent
Manchester Public Schools

Mavis LaBossiere
Education Coordinator
State Department of Human
Resources

Vincent Mazzotta
Representative
Connecticut Association of
Boards of Education
Hartford

Evelyn Mitchell
Lower School Principal
Renbrook School
West Hartford

Dede Moore
Head Start Director
Windsor

Nan Streeter
State Senator
West Hartford

Irene Weiss
Parent and Early Childhood
Consultant
Mystic

State Department of
Education Staff

Jean Rustici
Virginia Volk
Dianne Warner

Research Assistant

Leslie Branden
Bush Center
Yale University

APPENDIX C

Contract Consultants, 1985-1986

Judith Hurle is Director of Early Childhood Programs for the Bridgeport Board of Education. In this capacity, she administers nine Chapter I pre-kindergartens, two city pre-kindergartens, the Consultation Center/Parent-Child Program, four traditional kindergarten classes, and the Chapter I, kindergarten to second grade component that serves over 2,000 students. She serves as Educational Coordinator for the Greater Bridgeport Health Collaborative, and is also an elected member of the Madison Board of Education.

Regina Miller, Ph.D., is currently an Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education and Special Education in the College of Education and Allied Services at the University of Hartford as well as the Director of the University of Hartford Early Childhood Center. She serves as a consultant to area day care and early childhood centers, conducts in-service training and speaks to parent groups on a frequent basis.

Claudia Shuster is the Early Childhood/Day Care Director of the Capitol Region Education Council. In this capacity, she serves as the coordinator of the CREC Regional Early Childhood Education Network (funded by the State Department of Education) and is the education consultant of the Child Care Resource and Referral Service of the Corporate Consortium for Child Care. Additionally, she represents the Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children on the Child Day Care Council and currently serves as its Chairperson.

Andrea T. Urbano is currently the Director of a center serving forty children ages three through ten. She has worked as an education consultant in the New England region with the Bilingual Multicultural Resource Center at Columbia University Teachers College and as a licensing representative with the State Department of Health.

APPENDIX D *

Model Employer Report

I. MODEL EMPLOYER CONCEPT

A. Concept defined

II. DETERMINATION OF NEED

A. How are the needs of employees determined
B. How are they prioritized
C. Who are the key decision makers

III. METHODS OF MEETING THESE NEEDS (POLICIES AND PRACTICES)

A. Day Care
B. Child Care Information and Referral
C. Flextime
D. Job Sharing
E. Working out of the Home
F. Child-rearing Leave
G. Health Care Benefits
H. Employee Assistance

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

A. Who's doing what
B. Feasibility considerations
C. * equitability
D. * eligibility
E. * accessibility
F. * staffing
G. * cost
H. * funding source

V. EVALUATION OF EXISTING POLICIES AND PRACTICES

VI. AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

A model employer, as conceptualized by the Committee, is one who supports policies and practices that are aimed at improving the quality of family life for employees. Particular programs of interest to the Committee are those targeted at meeting the needs of families with young children.

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* This report was prepared by an intern of The State Department of Education, who worked in conjunction with the Committee.

A key element in establishing policies and practices for employees in all agencies studied is the negotiation process between labor organizations and agency management. Within the State Department of Education (S.D.E.), there are nine bargaining units representing various fields of employment. Each bargaining unit establishes its own set of criteria to meet the needs of its members and contracts are negotiated separately. However, if a policy is set into practice for one unit, then a precedent is set and management needs to consider the feasibility of implementing similar policies for all of its employees, though sometimes what is feasible for one group of employees is not for another.

A general method of assessing the needs of union members is through surveys. Needs are prioritized based on the level of interest. These needs or "demands" are then negotiated with management and with respect to collective bargaining laws.

The key decision makers in this process are the representatives of members of each individual bargaining unit and the agency management. This can vary depending on the bargaining unit structure and whether the unit represents classified or unclassified state employees (for classified state positions, refer to General Statutes; Section 5; 5-193 - Personal Act).

Policies being proposed and practices being implemented in various public and private industries include the following:

* Day Care. There are many models of implementing the provision of day care. See A Workshop On Options Proceedings: Families and Work
* Child Care Information and Referral
* Flextime
* Job Sharing

* Working out of Home

* Child-rearing Leave

* Variations of Health Care Benefits

* Employee Assistance

In state agencies, there seems to be a tendency for more flexibility on management's behavior in negotiating around issues of educational leave, staff development, transportation and child care. A proposed policy receiving less than a favorable response and not included in any of the labor contracts is that of job sharing. Job sharing is a contract between two employees to share the same position where there is agreement and congruency in scheduling and productivity. In the implementation, job sharing often does not yield itself to fulfillment of the agency's mission, particularly in terms of consistency in output of products and services. There is only one bargaining unit with a formalized flextime policy. Sick leave accrual rates and acceptable usages for leave are basically the same for all bargaining unit employees.

APPENDIX E

Training and Technical Assistance Report

With the charge put forth in the report by the Committee on Four Year Olds, their Families, and the Public Schools, the Training and Technical Assistance sub-committee set out to establish a training and technical assistance plan that would specify the nature, amount and cost of various training options. Within this goal three objectives needed to be met: 1) that the plan would enable providers of programs for young children and school personnel to implement developmentally appropriate services; 2) that the plan would focus on the critical role parents play in the child's early years; and 3) that the plan would provide mechanisms to involve parents in the education of their children.

The sub-committee began by assessing the existing training resources, the needs of providers and parents, and utilization of these resources.

Assuming that resources would be tied into slot availability and services, we used the statistics available from the previous report to assess three differing counties, Hartford, New London and Litchfield, whose levels are high, medium and low respectively. Within each county there is a range of types of communities with varying levels of slot availability.

Our list of possible agencies within each county included L.E.A.'s, Early Childhood Associations, licensed child care centers, licensed family homes, libraries, town social service departments, YMCA and YWCA, churches, and the special education networks. Each assessment included asking about the existing program for four year olds or parents, what training resources were available and what were the reasons for use or non-use.

We found that most training was provided by the local Early Childhood Associations on an average of five times a year for providers primarily, although parents were welcome.

Resources available through funded agencies such as L.E.A.'s, Head Start or D.H.R. centers were provided on a regular basis, but were not open to the community and were mostly geared specifically to that particular program. Again, these were for program staff, although parents could attend. Public libraries offered a few resources for parents with their children, but these tended to be designed for one type of family pattern. (i.e. parents staying home with children, parents of two year olds.)

In addition to local resources we assessed the current availability of state resources for providers and parents of four year olds. The State Department of Health, which licenses day care centers, has a regulatory function and offers minimal training as it pertains to children and their families. The State Department of Education, in an interagency agreement, provides consultation to providers and parents on an as-needed basis. However, there are currently only two consultants statewide for the early childhood centers and one consultant working with parent involvement in the Chapter I program. Special Education training is available through 17 networks in 10 clusters with training available to both parents and providers.

The Department of Human Resources, which licenses family day care homes and provides funding for 107 centers, currently has specialized staff who provide technical assistance to providers as well as contracted training resources, such as Eastern Connecticut State University.

The training resources available then, tend to be linked specifically to institutions or organizations providing services to four year olds with no apparent networking. Training is closely tied with funding availability and is geared mainly to providers.

The utilization of resources available depended on three factors:

whether it was policy, where it was located, and funding/or cost. In those programs where training was planned for staff, and in-service time was allotted on a scheduled basis, usage was high. Agencies also reported high turn out if the training was convenient (i.e., a suitable time and easily accessible place, as well as cost for training being low.)

Because policy often dictated the amount and kind of training and technical assistance offered to parents and staff, the types of training offered varied from agency to agency. For example, those programs receiving special education monies provided scheduled parent training on the specific special needs of that family. Head Start, which has a parent involvement component, provided assistance and training in areas directly related to the child (child development, nutrition), and in areas affecting the family as a whole (parent development, housing and jobs).

Training provided by the Special Education Networks was utilized not only by those working specifically in special education, but also by nursery, day care center, and public school personnel. Training included screening, identification and assessments, and working with parents (i.e. using computers in classrooms).

In order to assess the needs of providers and parents, we returned to our original list of resources and requested them to share any needs assessments they had completed for their communities. We received needs assessments from the following groups;

* Early Childhood Networks
* family day care home networks and associations
* Department of Human Resources Day Care Training Modules
* Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children Affiliate Groups
* private child care centers

Only two of the above groups used a formal assessment tool to determine the needs of the groups served. Once again, parents, although

welcome to join any of these groups, were not assessed separately from providers serving four year olds. The other groups did what they called "informal" assessments through annual meetings, cluster meetings or discussion groups.

Training topics were often decided upon by the board or committee in charge of providing the service, and would include current issues in the field of early childhood. The needs of the groups of providers fell into five general categories:

1) Child Development - Social-Emotional, Cognitive and Physical Development.

2) Special Education - Exceptional Children, Assessments and Strategies.

3) Staff Development - Working with Parents, Human Relations and Community Resources.

4) Hands-On-Activities - Art, Music and Storytelling.

5) Management/Administrative - Provider/parent rights and responsibilities, Health Concerns and Supervision.

Those programs providing services to four year olds reported having on the average three training workshops for parents per year. These were generally designed for parents of children in the program and needs were assessed informally. Most training fell into the category of child development with specific emphasis on children's behavior. However, programs did report that they felt ongoing support was given to parents on a daily basis if it was needed.

Training Options

Looking at the resources currently available, we see that fragmented services are offered throughout the state primarily for providers, with a small amount for parents. It is clear however, that groups providing resources have no support system or common web.

The Committee, in developing a training plan, decided to use or add the current resources which are familiar to providers, and to strengthen the support system from the department. We arrived at the following three options. These options can be done separately or parts from each can be combined to make one comprehensive plan. The optimal plan would be for all three to be done simultaneously.

A) Resource Bank

The often described, but never completed, resource bank would be similiar to an information and referral service. Training and technical assistance providers' names would be put into a computer by topic title and could be made available when training services were needed. In addition, a video library could be developed to be utilized by small groups for discussion and technical assistance. Topics would be pertinent to four year olds and geared to differing audiences, i.e., parent, provider, public school administrators. A follow-up series to the topics would be done on video through the resouce bank training providers. Lists of available topics could be provided to libraries, licensed centers and homes, parent support groups, and public schools.

Resource agencies could also supply training information to the resource bank, to be distributed on a monthly basis to communities so that providers and parents would be aware of upcoming events.

B) Intraagency/Interagency Support

The Committee strongly urges strengthening the role of the Department of Education in licensing child care centers and homes by providing additional consultants to work with providers on developmentally appropriate curricula, educational consultation and parent involvement. Currently, there are two consultants who work together with the Department of Health in licensing 1200 centers. Needless to say, this is a grossly inadequate number for the services rendered.

In addition, the intraagency systems which facilitate communication from one program service to another must be developed in order to serve parents and providers of four year olds better. For instance, parents involved in a Chapter I program who need additional services would be able to request such assistance through the parent involvement consultant. Programs such as the Birth to Three, Special Education Networks and pre-Kindergarten would all be basic components within the system.

C) Special Education Networks/Health Education Collaborative

These two services are currently working successfully statewide, providing a gamut of resources. By adding staff, the Committee agreed that additional support could be provided to four year olds and their families through these two efforts, thus building a statewide early childhood network that would take into consideration all the needs of the child and his/her family. This approach would be much more community based than the others and would offer a more personal way of working with parents and providers. Staff would be available to offer technical assistance to individuals as well as small groups and to provide information for additional resources. In addition, staff would develop systems which would

encourage communication and collaboration between parents, providers and school personnel.

A "warm-line" could be established to answer questions or make referrals pertinent to pre-schoolers and their families.

Cost Factors

A) Resource Bank

* Computer Software
* Salaries (2) full time
* Phone
* Copier
* Video Equipment
* Space

B) Interagency/Intraagency

* Salaries (6) full time
* Phone
* Space

C) Special Ed Networks/Health Ed Collaborative

* Salaries (10) full time
* Copier
* Space
* Phones

APPENDIX F

CREDENTIALING PLAN

PREPARED BY:

Regina Miller, Ph.D., Contract Consultant
Irene Weiss, Chairperson
Jean Rustici, SDE Liason
Barbara Hamlin
Evelyn Mitchell
George Coleman
Nan Streeter

Introduction

Education is no longer identified with "schooling." It is being recognized as a continuum of learning from birth. Early education (preschool), once a privilege for a few, now is commonly accepted for most children whether in the home, in a private center or in a public school facility. Societal changes and economic needs have complicated the life of the American family, making the period of early childhood more vulnerable and more in need of supportive environments where the child can learn and develop to his/her maximum potential. Women in the work force, especially large numbers of single parents, leave children in the hands of care givers who may or may not be qualified. Herein lies the problem.

The field of early childhood education has grown and developed in the last twenty years. Along with the refinements and growing sophistication in our understanding of the needs of young children have come changes in the nature of program delivery and a finer understanding of the role of the early childhood educator. All components of an early childhood program must be examined as an integrated whole if the quality of the program is to be evaluated. Nevertheless, the interactions between adults and children are the foundation from which a quality program develops. Good quality nurturing and education of young children are inseparable and emanate from positive, supportive, individualized adult-child interactions based on the understanding of the nature and needs of the preschool child.

One question is: Who is this person who possesses the qualities of the well rounded early childhood educator? Is it only the person who holds state certification in early childhood education who fills this role or are there persons who have skills and qualities that make them very appropriate for work with young children who do not have the official credentials to

hold such positions? The population of children involved in early childhood programs is becoming younger and younger. The system of public education is not experienced in serving younger populations. The certification efforts in early childhood have not kept up with the new trends in service delivery. Thre is a real need to support the infant/toddler/nursery/kindergarten (ITNK) credential as the most appropriate for the preschool years.

The other question is: Where do we find these early childhood educators? They work in public schools, DHR centers, Head Start, private centers and family day care homes. All of these individuals need a common body of knowledge in order to work effectively with young children.

The task of this subcommittee was fourfold: a) to assess approaches to credentialing individuals and programs in the state (for 3, 4, and 5 year olds), b) to review other states' credentialing standards, c) to review innovative credentialing efforts, and d) to develop recommendations regarding early childhood credentialing efforts.

State Approaches to Credentialing Individuals

In the State of Connecticut there currently exist three vehicles for credentialing individuals: state certification, the child development associate (CDA) and the associate degree in early childhood. Early childhood certification is content specific. There is specific content that must be taken in both the professional area and in the general education area. Although programs differ somewhat from one institution to another, students all have very similar training. They are all supervised in their student teaching experiences, although the supervision varies from school to school. The certification requires four years of full time study. It is an academic experience that is usually not competency based.

The goal of the certification and the college degree is to produce a "well rounded, well educated individual" with professional training.

The child development associate credential is a competency based credential that is awarded according to specific guidelines. Field work for this credential is supervised by a mentor, a professional in the field. The amount of time necessary to complete this credential is very flexible. The individual moves along at his or her own pace. The nature of the program is individualized according to each trainee's strengths and needs. The associate degree in early childhood may be obtained at several community collleges in Connecticut. The program specifies content in the professional area as well as the general education area. Students have field work, some on-site in campus day care centers and others in community placements. The goal of the associate degree is to prepare individuals to work directly with children in child care centers and early childhood programs and/or to prepare individuals to continue on to a four year program to complete the undergraduate degree.

The content of the certification in early childhood is divided between liberal arts (behavioral sciences, english, math and science, arts, etc.) and professional education (foundations of education, educational psychology, curriculum and methods and student teaching). The CDA is divided between liberal arts (behavioral sciences, english, math and science, arts, etc.) and professional education (foundation of education, educational psychology, curriculum and methods and student teaching). The CDA is divided into competency areas: healthy/safe environment; advances physical and intellectual competence; positive self image and individual strength; promotes positive functioning of children and adults in a group; coordination of home and center, child rearing practices, expectations; carries out supplementary responsibilities related to programs. The

credential also covers the following functional areas: safety; health; environment; physical; cognitive; language; creative; self-concept; individual strength; social; group management; home/center and staff. The associate degree content includes courses in: the nature of the young child; children with exceptionalities; creative arts; music and movement; methods and techniques; speech and language development and literature; the child, the family and community health; observation and student teaching.

The individual seeking state certification undertakes one or two semesters of supervised experience where both the content of knowledge and teaching techniques are observed and evaluated. The supervision is done by the cooperating teacher and the college supervisor. For the CDA, the individual develops a portfolio consisting of 13 sections which each require 3 entries plus a 150-300 word autobiography. Observation is done on performance in all 13 functional areas. The assessment is done by a local assessment team consisting of an advisor, parent and a consortium representative.

The individual in an associate program undertakes one semester of observation and one semester of student teaching. The student teaching is supervised by the cooperating teacher and the college supervisor.

In order to enter the professional component of a certification training program, an individual will need to pass CONNCEPT, a test of basic skills. The individual must be a high school graduate and maintain a certain grade point average in order to be permitted to enter a student teaching intership or practicum. One may acquire an associate degree prior to entering a professional certification training program. Usually when this occurs, the individual concentrates on professional courses and electives for the remainder of his/her school program. There are

individuals who enter certification programs either at the freshman or junior year level who have already obtained their CDA. The attainment of the CDA indicates that this individual has demonstrated competence and has successfully worked with children of preschool age.

Working towards the CDA in addition to certification or an associate degree in early childhood education is not redundant. One credential does not preclude the other. The critical variables in the CDA, competence demonstrated in both competency and functional areas, are very important to have in addition to the understanding and skills acquired through professional courses and student teaching.

The ideal situation would be to create a framework for individuals to be able to work on either (a) the CDA and certification simultaneously, (b) the CDA post certification, or (c) certification post CDA. An individual with both the CDA and certification would have demonstrated both conceptual and observable skills in working with young children and should be an asset to any classroom. These individuals would be able to work in child care centers and public or private preschool classrooms. To date, an individual with a CDA only cannot work as a teacher in a public school preschool program.

State Approaches to Credentialing Programs

The State of Connecticut currently has in place one main approach to credentialing early childhood programs which reaches all programs providing care for children from 3-5 years of age. The Connecticut Child Day Care Licensing Regulations, which have recently been updated, are the most far-reaching existing standards. They cover health and safety concerns, the physical facility, staffing (to determine if it is adequate within the regulations as to staff/child ratio as well as staff qualifications).

Although it asks for information regarding program content, this aspect of credentialing is limited in scope.

The format used for private school approval is somewhat similar to the child day care licensing regulations in that there is attention paid to staff/child ratio, physical facilities and materials specific to early childhood components of the private school. The approval process consists of a self study and a site visit. While this procedure for private school approval is totally voluntary, most schools find that it is to their advantage to obtain the approval.

Review of Other States' Credentialing Standards

A 1983 article in Young Children by Raymond Collins ("Child Care and the States: The Comparative Licensing Study") indicated that 26 states and the District of Columbia had adopted CDA into their licensing requirements for at least one category of center staff. An additional 7 states had CDA in their draft regulations. Ten states and the District of Columbia had requirements for a B.S. or B.A. degree for at least one category of center staff in 1981. Of these, only 3 states specified that the degree had to be in early childhood education or child development. Currently, in the state of Illinois, a pre-kindergarten teacher in public schools must hold a 4 year degree in early childhood or meet state standards for a day care center director (a minimum of high school degree, a CDA and at least 2 years experience working in preschool, kindergarten or a day care center).

It appears that although there is variation in the credentialing standards from one state to another, the CDA has become an extremely well recognized and valuable tool for assessing the skills of a potential staff

member.

State standards for certfication vary according to the number of required courses and the content of courses. In addition, states vary according to their requirements for student teaching. Often, state certification standards are altered due to changes in N.C.A.T.E. standards and/or concerns of professionals and parents relative to the preparation of future teachers.

Innovative Credentialing Efforts

* One possible credential would entail a career ladder, or differential credential concept. In this approach, each level of position in an early childhood setting would be defined by specific credentials, skills and/or experiences. Movement up the ladder would be contingent upon demonstrated, documented, observed growth (i.e., through a portfolio plus coursework package). This concept would necessitate all programs having credentialed individuals as staff members but would not require that all staff members have the same level credential. There would be a natural hierarchy which would relate to each specific job description. The hierarchy might consist of teacher assistant, associate teacher, teacher and early childhood specialist (NAP, 1984) with a common credential shared by all (i.e., CDA) and with each successive individual requiring the next successive credential on up the "ladder." Individuals might be motivated to move up the ladder (i.e., to gain more credentials) due to professional and monetary incentives. The individual might be able to work on the next level credential while maintaining his/her position, which would also add to the motivation for professional growth and development.

Should the job titles and job descriptions in early childhood become

unified and standardized across the State, horizontial mobility would become easier, thus allowing both individuals seeking employment and potential employers to share expectations and competencies.

* Another innovative credential would consist of a competency exam and observations. The content of the exam could include the following areas: creating an educationally sound environment; developing goals; knowledge of existing materials, readiness, creativity, the importance of play in language/social/physical and cognitive development; working as part of a team; working with parents; scheduling; health, safety and nutrition; outdoor play; and the ability to communicate to the general public the logic of programming for young children based on developmental ages and stages. The format of the exam might range from short answer to essay to oral. The observation would need to be done to see planning in action; to see the physical set up of the environment; to see the schedule in action; to observe interactions with parents and children; and to observe child motivational techniques and the affective environment (the level of warmth and feedback given to children).

An individual desiring this type of credential would need to meet some minimum standards (i.e., high school graduates, some experience and some formal training in early childhood education or child development). The benefit of this credential is that it is initiated by the individual and may move faster than the CDA.

* An additional innovative credential which requires delicate attention is that of retraining individuals who have been working with older children (i.e., elementary age) and who would like to, or are, finding themselves placed as staff in programs for preschool children. This credential would be available to aides, assistant teachers, teachers,

administrators as well as those who deliver supportive services (i.e., speech, school psychologist, special educator, etc.) to young children. The importance of such a credential cannot be overemphasized. Individuals trained to work with older children do not automatically understand the nature and needs of a preschool child and his/her family.

The content of this credential could include academic work covering such topics as: developmental ages and stages; developmentally appropriate materials and equipment; activities; scheduling; role of the parent; supportive services; range of abilities; and special needs. There are many vehicles for disseminating this training: course work; specifically contracted in-service; and site visits to good programs. The retraining could be academic or competency based or a combination of the two. A critical question relating to this retraining is who will do the retraining and within what type of time frame must it be completed. This will require much thought and may have to vary from one district to another due to staff qualifications and prior experience. A school district could develop a mentor relationship with either an early childhood specialist or an institution which would do in-service and supervision.

The issue of horizontal mobilitiy relates to this credential as well as others because comparable programs from one locale to another would need individuals with the same philosophical base, skills and competencies.

Recommendations Regarding Early Childhood Credentialing Efforts:

Credentialing of individuals:

1) In order to upgrade programs in early childhood education and to upgrade the professionalism of the field, it is necessary to assure that individuals working in the field have appropriate and relevant credentials which signify that they have demonstrated the skills, competencies and understanding of child development necessary to provide high quality programming for preschool children. As standards

are raised by those in the field, the public will become aware of the importance professionals place on the early childhood experience. Higher standards for individuals and more credentialing efforts will advance early childhood education as a professional discipline.

2) The Committee supports certification in early childhood education and the CDA as viable credentials for individuals who wish to work in the field. As mentioned earlier, each credential has its merits. The ideal credential to endorse would be certification and CDA. If one hired an individual with both of these credentials, one could be assured that this individual had the academic and practical experience necessary to work with preschool children in any setting.

3) The ladder concept, including universal job titles with accompanying universally outlined responsibilities, would add a lot to our professionalism and delivery of services. Staff qualifications as outlined in the Accredition Criteria and Procedures of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (NAEYC 1984, p. 19) would help to unify the field. When lay persons speak about a first grade teacher, there is a mindset for the role and function of that individual. Due to the variability in job titles in early childhood to date, there is little understanding of our roles.

4) Commitment to retraining school personnel who have not previously practiced below kindergarten level must be strong. The creation of a consortium of school personnel and early childhood professionals to discuss the design of retraining programs should take place. Bids from institutions of higher education or individual early childhood specialists for this training would need to specify the content of the training to be accomplished. The philosophical basis for this training should be broad; however, the thrust should be developmental in nature, in order to be supportive of the already established findings relative to the nature and needs of the preschool child.

Credentialing of programs:

1) The Committee supports the accreditation system of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs as an exemplary model for credentialing programs. The initial step in the process is an extensive self study (including staff and parent input), to be followed by self modifications, and a written program description to be submitted to the Academy, followed up by an on-site validation visit. This accreditation goes beyond health, safety and staff/child ratios. The credential focuses on quality of program content and quality of staff-child interactions.

2) Having a nationally recognized credential is important to the field of early childhood education. It would allow for awareness of quality programs across the state, region and

nation. It would allow parents to make educated choices. Programs would be better for the children who attend them.

3) The accreditation is voluntary. Any program under any auspices could seek the accreditation. Although the accreditation cannot be required, it is a set of standards to which to aspire. The guidelines should assist programs in becoming more sensitive to the needs of the children and parents it serves and the staff it hires. Using the guidelines as goals can be a learning and developing process for many involved in early childhood programs. Individuals who come to visit programs seeking accreditation are validators not evaluators. The self study becomes a plan of professional development. The process is to be commended.

Summary of Recommendations

1) Support Early Childhood Certification (ITNK) and CDA as ideal credentials.

2) Unify job titles, job descriptions and the necessary qualifications in order to promote horizontal and vertical professional mobility.

3) Retrain school personnel at all levels of service provision; establish on-going mentor relationships with early childhood specialists.

4) Recognize the accreditation system of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs as the exemplary model for credentialing programs.

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PROPOSAL FOR THE RETRAINING OF PROFESSIONALS TO WORK IN THE AREA OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

Prepared by

Regina Miller, Ph.D.

A) Rationale for Training:

Individuals who have been trained to work with older children (i.e., elementary ages) may in the future find themselves being required to work in the area of early childhood. Although some of the foundations courses that they have taken covered early childhood, the bulk of their preparation, both academic and practical, focused on the older child. In order to maximize the effect these individuals will have on the lives of young children, they will need to be retrained.

This training should be available to individuals at any level of service delivery (i.e., aides, assistant teachers, teachers, administrators) as well as those who deliver supportive services (i.e., speech, school psychologist, special educator, etc.).

B) Focus of Training:

The philosophical basis for this training should be broad. The thrust should be developmental in nature in order to be supportive of the already established findings relative to the nature and needs of the preschool child.

C) Content of Training:

1) Developmental ages and stages; range of abilities.
2) Developmentally appropriate materials and equipment.
3) Developmentally appropriate activities.
4) Scheduling of components of program.

5) Language development.

6) Cognitve development.

7) Motor development.

8) Social/emotional development.

9) Role of the parent.

10) Supportive services.

11) Identification of special needs children.

12) Working with the special needs child in the mainstream.

D) Who Does the Training? Where Does it Happen?

1) Course work can be taken at area colleges and/or universities which would cover some topics.

2) In-service training that is contracted for by a school, town or district which would specifically address the training needs of its staff.

3) On-site visits to quality programs for observation, in-service, field work.

4) School district could develop mentor relationship with an early childhood specialist who could assist the staff in developing goals and implementing training.

II. Credentialing of Individuals	Systems Reviewed	Systems Proposed
A. Connecticut State Board of Education Teacher Certification Early Childhood Endorsements N-K N-3 (Present) N-6 ITNK (Proposed)	X	
B. The Council For Early Childhood Professional Recognition - NAEYC Child Development Associate Credential	X	
C. "Differential" Credentials Credential Individuals For Specific Job categories and based on NAEYC standardized nomenclature. Adults in early childhood settings may have differing credentials according to level of professional responsiblity. Early Childhood Teacher Assistant - HS + Professional Development Early Childhood Associate Teacher - AA - AS - CDA Early Childhood Teacher - BA ECE/CD Early Childhood Specialist - BA ECE/CD + 3 year EXP and/or MA ECE/CD		X
D. Competency Exam and Classroom Observation Allows for Life Experience Credit. flexibility in credentialing		X

	Systems Reviewed	Systems Proposed
E. Retraining of professionals and administrators with certification but little or no experience working in early childhood programs.		X
F. Combinations of one or more of above A+B C+B C+B A+C ETC.		X

A-33

Sub-Committee D - Credentialing

Credentialing of Programs - Systems Reviewed	Licensed Day Care Centers - Private Non-Profit & Profit 59%	State Funded Day Care 7%	Head Start operated CAA 7%	Public School Pre-Kindergarten 59%	Independent Schools Pre-Kindergarten 4%	Legal Base	Mandatory	Voluntary
	TO WHOM APPLIED							
A. Connecticut State Department of Health Services Public Health Code Regulations for Child Day Care Centers and Group Day Care Homes - 10/28/85	X	X	X			CT. General Statutes 19a-79-1-8	X	
B. Connecticut State Department of Human Resources Child Day Care Guidelines - 1973		X				CT. General Statute 8-210	X	
C. School Approval Process - Criteria & Procedures for Public and Nonpublic School Registration, Approval and Agency Recognition - State of Connecticut Department of Education - 1985				X	X	CT. General Statutes 10-4a 10-184		X
D. Head Start Performance Standards - United State Department of Health and Human Services - 1973			X			P.L. 90-22 P.L. 93-644	X	
E. Accreditation Criteria and Procedures of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs A Division of the National Association For The Education Of Young Children - 1984	X	X	X	X	X	The Academy's criteria represent the consensus of the early childhood profession - adopted by NAEYC		X

APPENDIX G

Home/School Linkage Plan

I. RATIONALE

Increased stresses on the American family, including a dramatic rise in the number of single-parent families and the number of working parent families, are having a significant impact on the development of our young children. The simplistic myth extolling the sacred independence of the American nuclear family is being dispelled by these changes. Additionally, the extended family, the family's primary support system in the past, is no longer available to sustain this myth.

Families are making demands upon their communities to provide the support systems they need. The responsibility of the public school system to address these needs has been reinforced by recent longtitudinal studies (Lazar & Darlington, 1979) demonstrating the critical role that parents play in the education of their young children. The success of early childhood education programs has been shown to be directly dependent upon the positive involvement of family members as partners with teachers in supporting their children's development.

II. NATURE OF SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT

Responding to the mandation of families' needs and research findings, some public school systems and community agencies in Connecticut are implementing programs to support home/school communication. These programs strengthen families and enhance their ability to support the development of their children.

An array of options have been created to address family and community needs. These include:

* Written communication (newsletters, pamphlets and handbooks) - informational materials used to describe available programs and services, to provide parenting education and to offer guidance to parents as consumers of services (such as day care).

* Hotlines and warmlines - direct telephone lines accessing information to meet an immediate crisis (hotlines) or to meet general needs of parents for information on child development, community resources (warmlines).

* Resource and referral services - programs that collect and provide information to parents and help to develop services to address identified, unmet needs.

* Networking/interagency collaboration/early childhood coucils - programs that build communication between a variety of community agencies serving children and families, resulting in coordination of services and development of needed unavailable services.

* Libraries of books, toys and other parenting and child development equipment and materials.

* Direct parenting education programs including workshops and seminars at the workplace - programs and services that provide education for parents to support their role in their children's development.

* Parent/child joint activities - programs that offer opportunities for parents and children to share mutually enjoyable activities while supporting positive child development and healthy parent/child relationships.

* Early identification and development screening - programs which actively reach out to the community to build public awareness of the need for identification and to provide community-wide screening programs which identify young children who may need special services.

* Parent to parent programs - parenting education programs in which trained parents provide services to other parents.

* Transportation - services to transport children and parents enabling them to participate in programs or to travel between programs, resulting in the provision of continuity of care for children of working parents.

* Programs related to school staff - a variety of programs and services offered to staff to enable them to work more effectively with the parents of children in their programs and to support them in their own roles as family members.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES

Presently, the existence and vitality of home/school communication services in our state are dependent upon local knowledge and leadership. No state-wide system for informing school districts about possible options or linking them with exemplary programs exists. Likewise, no state funding mechanisms are in place to encourage such efforts.

To encouage the implementation of locally appropriate home/school communication programs by public schools, systems are needed to accomplish the following:

* Interagency collaboration - active effort initiated at the commissioner level to share goals and coordinate efforts between all state agencies interested in encouraging the development of home/school communication programs to minimize duplication of efforts and to maximize effectiveness.

* Advocacy - active education of state legislators and appropriate state and community groups to the unmet needs of young children and families in our state and the array of effective strategies to support these unaddressed needs.

* Information - media efforts/public information campaign to inform communities of the value of home/school communication programs and the array of locally implementable options.

* Resources - a compendium of national and state examples of home/school communication programs which are replicable and can serve as examples to be modified to meet community needs; to be distributed to local school systems, public libraries and other appropriate community agencies; and to be kept updated as part of a state-wide data base.

* Technical assistance - early childhood/parenting experts provided under the auspices of the State Department of Education to support the implementation of locally developed options.

* Funding - incentive grants to encourage local systems to create home/school communication programs.